

AMENITIES MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 1 June 2015

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: Mrs B J Churchill (Chairman)

Councillors: Dr S E Bartington C Holliday
 C Brown J S King
 H B Eaglestone D Temple
 C K Woodward

Non-Committee Members: A K Beames, Mrs C E Reynolds

Officers: Town Clerk Democratic Services Officer
 Facilities Manager Responsible Finance Officer

Also present: 2 Members of the public

A211 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

A212 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to be discussed at the meeting.

A213 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Councillor D Temple be appointed Vice Chairman of this Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

A214 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

- a. that the Minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 2 March 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- b. that the Minutes of the Recreation meeting held on 9 March 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- c. there were no matters arising from the Minutes.

A215 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Chris Pyne the Chairman of Witney Lawn Tennis Club was in attendance to update the Council on the four signs that had been erected along the perimeter of West Witney Sports Ground.

He said that the new signage would give greater awareness of the locality and promote and advertise Witney Tennis Club to the wider community of Witney. They were looking to

expand membership and felt the new signage would be of benefit especially with another open day coming up in June, to get more people involved in this club. The Tennis Club were unaware they should have contacted Witney Town Council for permission for this signage until the Facilities Manager contacted him. As they had already erected the signage he was asking Witney Town Council for permission to keep them in-situ as they were.

A216 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, VISION & OBJECTIVES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk explained the purpose of her report and suggested that it would be good to have some clear objectives of what the Council wished to achieve and set priorities for the 4 year term of office.

In respect of the Committee Terms of Reference a Member queried point 'c' which stated *to maintain and supervise the Council's Allotments*. As the Allotments were now managed by the Allotment Association the Member suggested that it should say *oversee the management of...* However the Town Clerk pointed out that the Council still managed the Park Road site so whilst 'c' was true of that, she would expand the reference as suggested.

Turning to the Committee Vision and Objectives, a Member commented that he would like to finish off current projects to a high standard first. The Chairman therefore suggested the Committee should prioritise those outstanding from October onwards. The Facilities Manager gave Members the background on the various outstanding projects. The Committee considered that the on-going tree works, the West Witney Sports & Social Club landlord responsibilities, the Premier Tennis lease agreement and West Witney Sports Ground pitch drainage were priority – however the latter realistically could not be achieved until the end of the 2015/16 football season but there was a lot of work in exploring external grant funding and working with the clubs. Members agreed that they should keep the project list under review.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Committee Terms of Reference be amended to read *c) To maintain and supervise the Park Road Allotments, and oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside and Newland Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association;*
3. that current projects are finished to a high standard, and the Committee keeps under review the project list as presented.

A217 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda.

The RFO explained that her report was for the last financial year up to 31 March 2015. She was in the process of redefining the cost centres to fit the new Committee Structure.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

A218 **ETON CLOSE PLAY AREA – REQUEST FOR A FOOTBALL GOAL**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda. It included correspondence from a young man requesting a football goal at Eton Close play area.

In answer to a Members question the Facilities Manager confirmed there would be no cost implication. She had reviewed the requirements for pitches with the FA during a recent meeting with local teams and one of the goal mouths from the Leys Recreation Ground had been identified as being surplus to requirements.

RECOMMENDED: that the request for a football goal be agreed, on the basis suggested above.

A219 **WITNEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB – REQUEST TO ERECT SIGNAGE AT WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND**

The Committee received and considered the correspondence from Witney Lawn Tennis Club regarding the new signage at West Witney Sports Ground, in addition to the presentation earlier in the evening by Mr Pyne.

Members were of the opinion that planning permission might have been needed from the Local Planning Authority. A Member also thought there might have been an issue with advertising consent and he was aware that the District Council had a colour code for signage and this might need to be followed too. Members agreed that the signage should remain in situ whilst the Club seeks the necessary permissions retrospectively, before the Council could agree to the signage being there.

RECOMMENDED: that the Witney Lawn Tennis Club ascertain from the Local Planning Authority (WODC) if planning permission/advertising consent is required and apply retrospectively if needed.

Member of the public left at 6.35

A220 **HAILEY ROAD ALLOTMENTS – ROWAN COTTAGE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda. The Facilities Manager explained the background and having received an estimate from the surveyor the previous Council had agreed that it should be carried out by the in house workforce in order to reduce the costs.

A Member raised his concern with regard to guarantees and warranties for the work if the Council's workforce were to undertake the job. He suggested that in order to protect the Council in the long term he would prefer to see it undertaken by a qualified contractor.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Facilities Manager gets quotes from external contractors to do the work.

A221 **WOODGREEN/LITTLE GREEN**

The Committee received and considered the correspondence from the landowners, Hailey Parish Council as circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk pointed out that the Council would also be responsible for the legal fees.

RECOMMENDED: that the Council purchases the land at Woodgreen/Little Green for £100 from Hailey Parish Council.

A222 **UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES WORKING PARTIES**

a) Splash Park Working Party

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Splash Working Party from the meeting held on 13 April 2015. The Facilities Manager also updated Members on the project. She advised that the project was still on time, the planning permission for the large piece of play equipment had been submitted and the outcome waited.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Minutes of the Splash Park WP meeting held on 13 April 2015 be agreed
2. that the planning permission be pursued vigorously.

b) Skate Park/BMX Project Working Party

The Town Clerk explained the background to this project. She had requested an update from the District Council's Leisure Manager. She understood that contractors were to provide labour and diggers to move the spoil into place to form the BMX track; however the track still needed to be designed, and suggested that the Working Party should re-engage with the young people.

A223 **CEMETERIES & CLOSED CHURCHYARDS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a verbal report from the Facilities Manager and the Chairman on the situation with regard to St Mary's Closed Churchyard.

The report of the Town Clerk was also considered. Members discussed the application to erect a babies memorial in the adults section at Tower Hill Cemetery. Whilst they were sympathetic to the request it was felt that the memorial should be kept natural colour-wise.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the reports be noted;
2. that the installation of the memorial be agreed so long as it was not coloured.

A224 **WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND SUB COMMITTEE**

Cllr King declared a non-pecuniary interest because his wife was Treasurer to West Witney Bowls Club.

The Committee received a verbal report from the Facilities Manager. She had met with the Sports & Social Club recently and in terms of reaching their required goals of being compliant with their lease obligations they were almost there. She was just waiting for a few certificates to come through. They were now broadly compliant and had fulfilled their requirements as a tenant to run and manage this.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal report be noted.

A225 **PUBLIC HALLS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Public Halls Committee held on 27 April 2015. In answer to a Members question the Town Clerk confirmed that the Council was going to run the Corn Exchange up to a period of 12 months in the first instance.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes of the special meeting of the Public Halls Committee held on 27 April 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

A226 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the commercial and confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

Member of the public left at 7.10.

A227 **PUBLIC HALLS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and considered the Town Clerk's confidential reports and the draft Heads of Terms drawn up by the Council's agent, Alder King, for a lease to the Witney Corn Exchange Trust. The Town Clerk explained that any recommendations would go to the Policy & Resources Committee on 15 June, which would then need to be ratified by full Council on 24 June.

Members considered the level of rent suggested and requested more information on how it was calculated. A Member raised the fact that although it was designated for community use she wondered if local businesses would be precluded from using it given what was stipulated in the HoTs. Also with the Trusts vision of a café in the Corn Exchange this would probably be run on a commercial basis - how would this fit into the lease.

In answer to a Members question the Town Clerk advised that the Officers were currently in the process of transferring over the bookings from Langdale Hall. The Member asked what was happening about the stage and other furniture, would the Trust lease it or would it be an asset transfer. The Town Clerk advised that this was for the Committee to decide. Members considered that the inventory and asset list should be in its favour.

The Town Clerk updated Members on the moratorium of the sale of the Langdale Hall and explained what would happen if a community bid was received by 16 June 2015.

Members considered the three quotations in respect of the curtains for the Corn Exchange which had not been included in the original tender due to budgetary constraints.

The Facilities Manager had been looking into the logistics of storage. A Member commented that containers may not be the solution because of condensation. The Facilities Manager also raised her concerns with the floor. A Member advised that it was important to get the correct cleaning machine and products.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Town Clerk's confidential reports and draft heads of terms be noted;
2. that Members forward any questions or observations on the draft heads of terms to the Town Clerk by 5 June so that she could clarify matters with the Council's Agent, and revert back to the Policy & Resources Committee;
3. that the Town Clerk renegotiates the quotations for the curtains and brings them back to the meeting of the Public Hall Sub-Committee.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.
